NURSING NOTES

The Alumni Newsletter of Mississippi University for Women’s College of Nursing • Spring 2015

What’s Inside

- Message from the Dean .................................................. 1
- Message from the ASN Program ................................. 5
- Message from the BSN Program ............................... 6
- Message from the Graduate Program ......................... 8
- News from Our Alumni .................................................. 11
- Alumni Committee Report ........................................... 12
- ASN Winston County Tornado Relief ......................... 13
- Faculty in the News ...................................................... 13
- Open Invitation ........................................................... 15
Message from the Dean

Dr. Sheila Valiant Adams

This year will mark the end of an illustrious 39-year career. Mary Jo Kirkpatrick, Associate of Science in Nursing department chair and program director, will retire at the end of June 2015. It is a bittersweet time for our college. Although we wish her the best in her retirement, we will miss her immensely. She has been an effective leader and an integral part of us for so many years that it is difficult to imagine the void that will exist as she departs. How can one depict, in just a few brief paragraphs, the 39-year legacy of Mary Jo Kirkpatrick?

Mary Jo distinguished herself in all areas during her tenure at The W. She has been the Associate of Science in Nursing department chair/program director for twenty-three years (1992-present). She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from the University of Mississippi Medical Center in 1975 and her Master of Science in Nursing degree from Mississippi University for Women in 1978. She distinguished herself early in her career, quickly moving from clinical assistant to instructor to assistant professor and ASN department chair/program director. In addition, she served as the interim head of the Division of Nursing twice (2003-2004 and 1999-2000) when the nursing dean was asked to serve as the interim vice president for academic affairs and provost for the university. Mary Jo was chosen to serve as interim nursing division head because of her strong administrative and leadership expertise.

Her faculty have always seen her as a strong and respected leader, teacher, and advisor. They have consistently commended her for the exceptional job she has done balancing administrative/leadership responsibilities with meeting the needs of faculty and students. She has always been known for working closely with the ASN faculty and students. Recently she led them in the evaluation and revision of the ASN curriculum to reflect new changes in accreditation standards, challenged faculty to develop and incorporate at least one new creative teaching strategy into their classes for the next year, and led the ASN faculty to develop and implement a new retention plan, ASAP, to promote retention and graduation success. This plan utilizes multiple approaches to aid in nursing student progression from the first semester in the nursing major to the last semester in the nursing major. She led the ASN faculty in successful implementation of this Plan. In 2009, prior to the implementation of the ASAP plan, the nursing student admission to graduation retention rate was 64.3%. After implementation of the ASAP Plan, the admission to graduation retention rate increased to 83%. Mary Jo led the ASN faculty to think “outside of the lecture box.” She encouraged each faculty to alter teaching strategies to meet the diverse student-learning needs. Part of the ASAP Plan required faculty to integrate evidence-based practice into the theory and clinical content they taught. In addition, faculty were encouraged to use concept maps for the content that was most missed on student tests. Faculty did a continuing education (CEU) presentation on the ASAP Plan at one of the Mississippi Organization for Associate Degree Nursing Conventions. The session was very well attended with many follow-up questions.

Mary Jo has played a significant role in the excellence of the Associate of Science in Nursing program at Mississippi University for Women.
through her leadership. For example, she has developed and introduced several new nursing elective courses aimed at helping nursing students successfully complete the nursing program. One of these courses, NU 105 Pre-Nursing Seminar, helps pre-nursing students understand what will be expected of them in the nursing major. She designed this course to provide pre-nursing students with an overview of the nursing school experience. During this course, students explore the realities of nursing school and develop skills for success in completing the nursing major. Another course, NU 106 Learning Strategies, helps the beginning nursing student adapt to the nursing curriculum. It helps students assess their individual learning style, improve reading comprehension and study skills, and actively engage in critical thinking. For this course she used a book, *You are Smarter Than You Think*. After introducing this course in 2003, the fall-to-spring pass rate in the ASN Program increased to 89% from 79% the prior year. She also designed and implemented NU 104 Math Application for Nurses. This course, for pre-nursing students, enhances the student’s understanding of basic mathematical skills and their eventual application to accurate calculation of drug solution dosages. In addition, Mary Jo taught NU 100 Pharmacology, which is a required course for all ASN students. She creatively designed a relay game for learning the system of measurement equivalencies. Since students frequently have problems with drug calculations and equivalencies, she spent many hours outside of class helping individual students who needed help in this area. Her expertise in this area is well recognized, and she was asked by Lippincott Publishers to write several study guides, including *Study Guide to Accompany Foundations of Clinical Drug Therapy* and *A Study Guide to Accompany Clinical Drug Therapy: Rationale for Nursing Practice*.

Mary Jo also led her faculty to develop an objective tool to be used in determining a clinical grade of A, B, C, D, or F. Most nursing programs use a pass-fail clinical tool since determining an objective clinical letter grade is difficult. However, Mary Jo and the ASN faculty wanted to develop a tool that would objectively recognize the “A” clinical student who went “over and above” from the marginal clinical student who performed at the minimal “C” level. Again, her faculty did a CEU session on this evaluation tool at one of the Mississippi Organization for Associate Degree Nursing Conventions, and it was also well attended with many follow-up questions and requests for assisting other ASN programs in this area.

Additional accomplishments include a recent national Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) accreditation site visit. Mary Jo effectively and successfully lead the ASN Program in preparations for this accreditation visit in 2013. Recent changes in accreditation standards called for a very thorough and extensive review utilizing NLN’s Core Competencies, Values, and Integrating Concepts for Nurses. She involved all ASN faculty in preparations for the site visit. As part of these preparations, Mary Jo led the ASN Program in reviewing the ASN curriculum related to the National League for Nursing Core Competencies for ASN Programs, American Nurses Association Standards, National Council of State Boards of Nursing Practice Analysis, Institute of Medicine’s Future of Nursing Report, Joint Commission’s Quality and Safety Education for Nurses Competencies, NCLEX-RN Program Summary Reports, and Assessment Technologies Institute Predictor Content. Course objectives were compared to student-learning outcomes which were then compared to NLN Core Competencies. Because of Mary Jo’s effective leadership, the ASN Program was found to be in compliance with all ACEN accreditation standards, and there were no recommendations to address.
Another significant accomplishment is the revision of all tests within the ASN Program to meet the NCLEX Test Plan. Mary Jo worked with the ASN Program faculty to make changes in writing test items to increase the clarity of questions, to increase the level of difficulty, and to create tests according to the NCLEX Test Plan. This was a difficult process, and she effectively guided her program through this endeavor. As part of this process Mary Jo read every test question and provided feedback to faculty so they could make necessary revisions to meet the NCLEX Test Plan. Faculty were excited about the process and outcomes related to the effectiveness of ASN Program test questions and better preparation of students to pass the NCLEX Exam.

Mary Jo also challenged ASN Program faculty to look at trended aggregated data including content deficiencies noted in the past three years of the NCLEX-RN Program Summary and ATI Predictor. Faculty had to evaluate their specific content areas and submit new teaching/learning strategies, including use of the simulation lab, by the end of the spring semester. Another significant recent accomplishment for the ASN Program was the GAP Analysis of the ASN Curriculum using the newly adopted Mississippi Competency Model-Future Nursing Core Competencies. Mary Jo effectively led the ASN Program to evaluate the ASN Program’s curriculum to identify and correct any GAPS in it. The practice partner from the hospital actively participated in this process and related the findings to the expectations for associate degree nurses in the practice area. Mary Jo also worked with the MUW BSN Program, as a part of this process, to identify any GAPS between the ASN Program and BSN Program curriculums for the RN to BSN Advanced Placement students. This process ensured content taught in the ASN program was not being repeated in the RN to BSN Advanced Placement option.

Mary Jo has encouraged nursing students at all levels of practice to continue their nursing education. She recently worked with The W’s BSN Program in their development of a dual enrollment plan. This plan allows students in ASN programs to take certain courses in The W’s BSN Program and be able to graduate with a BSN degree one semester sooner.

All ASN Program outcomes have been excellent, including retention, graduation, and NCLEX pass rates. The above examples are only a sampling of some of the more innovative leadership strategies developed and utilized by Mary Jo. She has been an outstanding and innovative leader with a strong desire to help students succeed and graduate. Another example of her leadership in this area is her thorough assessment of each incoming class to remove all possible barriers to success. Each summer, when the new ASN freshman class is admitted, Mary Jo meets individually with each student. During this session, she identifies barriers that may prevent the student from successfully completing the program. She then works with each student to remove or remedy those individually identified barriers prior to the student beginning the nursing program. This includes referrals to appropriate campus resources such as the Counseling Center, Academic Support, and the disabilities coordinator. She has always believed good advising is essential to student success so she works with all ASN faculty on matters related to advising students to make sure they are kept up to date on all advising issues. Often, she organized a refresher advising workshop for ASN faculty that included a session in the computer lab with the registrar.

In addition, she has had a consistent pattern of excellence in scholarly and professional activities and in community service. She has been very active in professional activities and is seen as a respected leader within the profession of
nursing and within the state. She has served as president-elect, president, and past president of the Mississippi Organization of Associate Degree Nursing (MOADN). She served on the MOADN Board and was responsible for planning and coordinating the MOADN education offerings at the convention for three years. She also served on the MOADN Membership Committee, Education Committee, and Nominating Committee. One highlight was her coordination of a three-day “Mississippi Nursing Education Institute” at Eagle Ridge Conference Center. This was referred to as the “Boot Camp for Nursing Educators” and was well attended by new and seasoned nurse educators from most of the nursing education programs in Mississippi. All faculty attending the workshop said it was extremely helpful and gave them new ideas to implement in their respective nursing programs.

Mary Jo has been active in the National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing, serving on the Bobbie Anderson National Scholarship Committee, the president’s Task Force on Membership, and the Membership Committee. She has been a past president and vice-president of Sigma Theta Tau, Zeta Rho Chapter, the International Nursing Honor Society. She has also served in numerous positions in Sigma Theta Tau Zeta Rho Chapter such as president, vice-president, and chair for membership. She served on many committees, including the Membership Committee, Program Committee, Finance Committee, Founders Day Committee, among many others. She served as chair for the Cookbook Fund-raising Committee, chair of the Fashion Show Fund-raising Committee, and Mentoring Committee. Because of her significant and numerous contributions to the Sigma Theta Tau Zeta Rho Chapter, a Zeta Rho scholarship was established for RN to BSN students called the Mary Jo Kirkpatrick Scholarship. In addition, the Mary Jo Kirkpatrick Scholarship was started this year for students in the ASN Program. Once endowed, the scholarship will be awarded each year to a deserving ASN student.

Other professional activities include being an active member of the Mississippi Council of Deans and Directors of Schools of Nursing (MCDDSN). Within this organization she has served as a long-standing member of the Accreditation Review Committee. She also has served on the MCDDSN Evaluation Committee, Education-Service Liaison Committee, Telecommunications Committee, and State Externship Committee. She is an IHL state accreditation visitor for nursing programs and has served as chair of numerous accreditation committees. Additional professional activities include serving on the Mississippi Nursing Organization Liaison Committee, the Task Force for Mandatory CEU’s, the Rural Health Corps, and the State Committee to Study Competencies of the Associate Degree Nursing Student. She has been a long-standing member and supporter of the Mississippi Nurses Association (1977-present) and frequently attends meetings, conferences, the Annual Nightingale Gala, and other events.

Of special note is her outstanding service on the Board of Directors for the Methodist/LeBonheur Healthcare System. She has served as a member of that board since 2006. Because of the excellence of her contributions, she was asked to serve on the Methodist/LeBonheur Quality Committee in 2007 and has chaired that committee since 2008. Because of her recognized expertise in patient safety, she was asked by the Methodist/LeBonheur Healthcare System to speak at the 2009 National Forum on Quality Improvement for Health Care, Institute for Health Care Improvements. Her presentation, “The Bottom Line Redefined: Engaging Your Board on Quality and Patient Safety,” was made to physicians and hospitals from all over the United States. The presentation was very well received. She was selected as the
Message from the ASN Program

I am pleased to announce that last April we received formal notification from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) that the ASN program was granted continuing accreditation without conditions. We also received official notice of continuing accreditation from Mississippi’s Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL). The next evaluation visit will be in fall of 2021. Again, I would like to thank administration, faculty, staff, students, graduates, and communities of interest for their support and participation in this process.

Forty-two students graduated in May of 2014, and we admitted 49 freshmen and 50 sophomores last fall. Of the 50 sophomores, 24 are LPN advanced placement students. Last spring MOSA members and faculty donated supplies and money for Winston Medical Center Nursing Home tornado relief and a fellow student whose home was destroyed. MOSA continues to actively support Safe Haven and Baptist Hospice in Columbus and Blair Batson Children’s Hospital in Jackson.

I am happy to report that for the first time in two years we have a full complement of faculty. Our newest faculty, Tammy Bolton, is providing clinical experience in a new facility, Northwest Medical Center in Winfield, AL. She became a grandmother for the first time this past summer! Mary Helen Ruffin has completed one semester toward her Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP) at William Carey, and Adrian Sligh has been accepted into the DNP program at Samford University. Brandy Larmon will complete her Ph.D. in May.

New teaching/learning strategies have been implemented which increased retention outcomes in the first semester. Faculty are working hard to monitor the changing health care system to make sure the curriculum is up to date and meets ACEN and IHL standards.

At the 2014 M-OADN Convention last March, Macy Woods was recognized as the MUW ASN “Outstanding Student of the Year.” Justin Simpson was our “Bobbie Anderson Scholarship” nominee. Congratulations to both of you for representing the ASN Program. During the 2014 College of Nursing and Speech Language Pathology Research and Awards Day, Macy Woods was recognized as the “Excellence in Nursing” Generic Student Award winner, and Teresa Sanders was recognized as the “Excellence in Nursing” Advanced Placement Student Award winner. Again, congratulations to these graduates!

Thank you for sending students our way! Please continue to talk to prospective students about the program. You are our best recruiters!

This is my last letter to you. I will retire on June 30.

I have known and worked closely with Mary Jo during the 39 years she has been at The W. During that time she was both a mentor and a friend to me. I will miss my friend but look forward with excitement to this new chapter now opening in her life. We thank you for your many years of service, for your strong leadership, and for all you have done to make us better. We will miss you!
Message from the BSN Program

The Baccalaureate Nursing Program has continued to have another very busy year. Dr. Joyce Pate joined the BSN Columbus faculty this fall. Dr. Pate came to MUW from Pensacola Christian College where she taught for over 20 years. Mrs. Cathy Smith rejoined the generic faculty after working on the Tupelo campus for a few years. Since our last alumni update, we have welcomed four full-time employees to our Tupelo campus. Mrs. Carol Vinzant, a former MUW ASN faculty member, joined the Tupelo faculty as coordinator. Mrs. Leigh Anne Puckett loved her work as an adjunct faculty so much that she transferred to a full-time position this fall. Mrs. Penny Finch, a W alum, also joined the Tupelo faculty this fall. Ms. DJ Chumbley is another new addition to Tupelo. She is working as an administrative assistant and has already established long-term relationships with the APO students. Additionally, Mrs. Lisa Bailey, Dr. Kristi Dempsey, Mrs. Terri Green, Mrs. Lisa Pearson, and Mrs. Melody Poole agreed to serve as adjunct faculty members. Likewise, Mrs. Gayle Elliott and Ms. Janice Giallourakis have returned to MUW as adjunct faculty members. The program welcomes each of our new addition/returnees to the MUW nursing faculty and staff.

Mrs. Cathy Smith and Mr. Terry Todd are still enrolled at Samford University in the DNP programs. Both are set to graduate this spring. Mrs. Melesia Henry is working on the final touches of her dissertation, and she should complete her PhD this year. Mrs. Carol Vinzant and Mrs. Dana Walker are following in Cathy and Terry’s footsteps and will begin the DNP Program at Stamford this spring.

Generic students are still admitted based on ACT score and overall GPA. Each applicant for the generic program must have a 21 on the ACT and a 2.75 overall GPA. In May, 58 students graduated, and our program again had a very successful
NCLEX first write percentage. This fall, 120 students were enrolled in generic nursing courses.

Our RN to BSN Program has yet again recognized increased enrollment; we had 420 students enrolled for the fall. Because of that increased enrollment, we have continued to be very fortunate to find seasoned nurses and nurse educators to fill adjunct vacancies. All of the faculty members have continued to work diligently to be sure that the students get a quality nursing education. Requirements for admission to the RN to BSN Program include licensure as an RN, an ACT score of 21 with a 2.0 GPA (if ACT is less than 21, students must have a 2.5 GPA), and completion of a minimum of 50 hours of prerequisite courses. The RN to BSN Program admits students once a year in the fall.

The BSN Program was approved to offer a Dual Enrollment Advanced Placement Option Track beginning in the spring of 2015. The Dual Enrollment Track will allow students who meet criteria and are currently enrolled in an ASN program to take courses that will apply toward the BSN degree. Students who have completed the dual enrollment classes will then be able to complete the BSN degree in two semesters rather than the usual three semesters. Mrs. Jolyn Cooke is the faculty member who will assist this initial group of students as we begin this exciting new option. As always, contact the BSN Program office if you have questions about the process for either track.

Our BSN students have again been very busy this year. They certainly have been giving freely of their time, talent, and resources. The SNA, under the direction of Ms. Jessica Jeremiah and Mrs. Gladys Mooneyham, has continued to participate in numerous community service projects. This past summer, the junior students supported the United Way backpack initiative and assisted with health education for over 600 students and their family members. The BSN students also led an effort this fall to assist the Diamond Grove Center in Louisville. The initiative allowed students to bring books, undergarments, and toys for three months. Then during November, students and faculty presented all of the items to the Diamond Grove Center. Furthermore, MUW students have continued to participate in the statewide Mississippi Association of Student Nurses Breakthrough to Nursing Project (BTN). Our students teamed up with and mentored a local group of high school students, helping them with skills, information, and basics of nursing school requirements. The BTN project has been invaluable to the local students. The SNA members rallied around the son of a former graduate who was diagnosed with leukemia. The students raised in excess of $2200 to assist the family. Finally, the nursing intramural team “IV League” once again won the 2013-2014 Overall Award for Intramural Sports here at MUW.

 Likewise, our RN to BSN students have kept busy with community service. They raised money for the Festival of Hope and participated in numerous fun, educational activities to support patients and families with life-changing illnesses. The group also assisted with a back-to-school initiative which provided food and clothing to families with needs. This fall, the students supported runners in the St. Jude’s marathon with over $3000.00 raised. The APO students have been very helpful with the generic students’ service efforts, too.

MUW was fortunate to have 2014 graduate Morgan Webb serving as MASN president for 2013-2014. She passed the gavel at the end of the October 2014 MASN convention. Her statewide efforts were greatly appreciated by all MASN members. Another 2014 graduate Haritha Abbott served as MASN advisor and was instrumental in assisting with all of the prep work for statewide MASN
The Graduate Nursing Program had another busy and productive year. The MS IHL and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) approved MUW as a doctoral-granting university, and the DNP Program was approved. Drs. Kristi Acker and Lorraine Gaddis joined our faculty in early 2013 to teach in the DNP and MSN programs; they have brought varied content expertise to our faculty and have helped strengthen areas of our program, such as oncology and palliative care as well as LGBT health. Dr. Terri Hamill continues to coordinate the MSN-Family Nurse Practitioner program, and Drs. Acker and Gaddis co-coordinate the DNP program. The graduate nursing faculty presented at state, regional, activities. During the fall MASN convention, two W students were again selected to the Circle of Excellence, Angela Reed and Chandler Robertson. Both Angela and Chandler are very active at the MUW chapter level and have participated extensively in the chapter’s community service activities since arriving at MUW. We are pleased that all of these students are willing to serve at the state level and know that they have represented and will continue to represent The W well.

Please feel free to tell students about The W and encourage them to call and come to see us. The faculty and I are always willing to talk to prospective students. Let me know if you have any questions or suggestions. We appreciate your continued support for nursing at The W.

Tammie McCoy, Chair

THE BSN FACULTY
BACK, L TO R:
Jessica Jeremiah, Carol Vinzant, Rosemary Marecle, Dana Walker, Terry Todd, Hannah Bascomb, Sally Pearson, Cathy Smith, Rusty King, Tara Sullivan, Beth Turner, Gladys Mooneyham

FRONT, L TO R:
Tammie McCoy, Leigh Anne Puckett, Penny Finch, Deborah Miranda, Joyce Pate, Melesia Henry, Debbie Swartz, and Sacha Dawkins

Message from the Graduate Program

The Graduate Nursing Program had another busy and productive year. The MS IHL and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) approved MUW as a doctoral-granting university, and the DNP Program was approved. Drs. Kristi Acker and Lorraine Gaddis joined our faculty in early 2013 to teach in the DNP and MSN programs;
and national conferences, attained additional certifications, and received recognition for their work. These presentations are an important component of faculty qualifications required for SACSCOC and Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditations. The graduate nursing faculty members have really “hit the accelerator” this year in presenting their work and expertise. As the department chair, I am really proud of their ongoing hard work and accomplishments. These presentations and accolades have been accomplished while continuing to teach effectively, contribute to the college and university, and maintain current practices as nurse practitioners.

Dr. Kristi Acker earned the ACHPN® credential (Advanced Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse) and is currently the only APRN in Mississippi with this certification. She completed the Alabama Board of Nursing Leadership Academy in October 2014 and has presented her work on advance directives, oncology practice guidelines, and palliative care for the Alabama Board of Nursing Leadership Conference and Sigma Theta Tau Region 8 Conference in Murfreesboro, TN during fall 2014. Dr. Acker and I directed an MSN student research project on advanced directives that was presented at the annual Mississippi Nurses Association (MNA) Convention roundtable research panel in Biloxi in October.

Dr. Sueanne Davidson continues to work closely with the Mississippi Board of Nursing (MSBON) and Mississippi Nurses Association (MNA) to present continuing education programs and updates on controlled substance prescribing. She has worked extensively with local and state chapters of the Mississippi Alzheimer’s Association to present programs related to caregiver and provider information for treatment and management of Alzheimer’s Disease.

Dr. Lorraine Gaddis presented her dissertation work, Growing Up Lesbian: I Only Knew I Was Different, at the Southern Regional Counseling Education Conference in Birmingham, AL as well as the Sigma Theta Tau Region 8 Conference in Murfreesboro, TN. Her work has also been accepted for a poster presentation at the 2015 National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties Conference (NONPF) in Baltimore, MD in April and at the 2015 American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA this coming June. Dr. Gaddis directed an MSN research project on depression that was presented at the annual MNA Convention roundtable research panel in Biloxi in October.

Drs. Terri Hamill and Carey McCarter continue their research on barriers to nurse practitioner residency programs and transitioning nurse practitioners into practice. This was Dr. Hamill’s DNP project, and Dr. McCarter served as her advisor. The project has been accepted for a podium presentation at the 2015 NONPF Conference in Baltimore, MD in April. Dr. Hamill directed an MSN project on analysis of screening practices for Type 2 Diabetes that was accepted for the MNA Convention roundtable research panel in Biloxi in October. Dr. Hamill currently serves as MNA District 18 president, and Dr. McCarter currently serves as MNA District 18 board representative from Clay County. Dr. McCarter also serves on the MNA Advance Practice Council.

Dr. Shonda Phelon presented her work on assessing suicide risk in primary care settings at the National Nurse Practitioner Symposium Poster Presentation in Keystone, CO in July 2014 and as a podium presentation at the American Association of Psychiatric Nurses in Indianapolis, IN this past October. Dr. Phelon will present her work from her DNP project on suicide assessment in a podium presentation at the 2015 AANP Conference in June 2015. She currently serves as MNA District 23 president.
Dr. Patsy Smyth continues to anchor our MSN program with her expertise in genetics, pediatric and geriatric content, as well as accreditation and research. She is currently lending her expertise in accreditation as we prepare for the upcoming Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) site visit for our DNP and FNP certificate programs.

I have also been busy wrapping up SACSCOC reports and preparing CCNE documents for our upcoming fall 2015 visit. My work on graduate nursing admissions interview scoring was accepted for a poster presentation at NONPF in Baltimore, MD in April, 2014. I have completed nine additional credit hours of graduate level statistics from Texas A&M University and now have enough hours to teach a statistics course for our DNP students. This will fill a gap in our DNP program so that our students and potential students can complete this pre-requisite on our campus. I am serving as Sigma Theta Tau Zeta Rho Chapter president this year and remain active in MNA and AANP. I attended the AANP Region 11 Invitational Leadership Meeting in Atlanta at the end of January. I was nominated for the Faculty of the Year award during the Annual Mississippi Nurses Foundation Nightingale Awards. I was honored to be the recipient of the AANP State Award of Excellence at the 2014 AANP conference this past summer in Nashville, TN.

MSN students are still admitted based on GRE score, GPA, and interview score. Each applicant for the generic and certificate programs must have a 3.0 analytical writing score on the GRE and a 3.0 GPA to qualify for an interview. DNP students are admitted based on GRE score, GPA, and interview score. Each applicant for the DNP must have a 3.5 analytical writing score on the GRE and a minimum 3.0 GPA to qualify for an interview and complete a 1000-word essay regarding why they want to complete the DNP. In August, 38 students graduated from the MSN program, one student completed the post-graduate FNP program, and our program again had a very successful AANPCP and AACN first write pass percentage. This fall, 42 students were accepted into the MSN or post-graduate certificate program. Currently, three students are slated to graduate from the DNP program in May 2015, and three students are enrolled as part-time DNP students. We will accept our third full-time cohort of DNP students in August 2015.

Our DNP students participated in the second annual DNP Day at the MS Capitol organized by Senator Terry Burton. Our DNP students and several graduate faculty members participated with guest speakers, including lobbyist Heather Ladner, Senator Burton, representatives from the Lt. Governor’s office, and others. DNP student Alena Lester was accepted to present her DNP project work on development and implementation of a workplace wellness program in Summer 2015 at the AANP Conference in New Orleans, LA. Dr. Sally Pearson, a BSN faculty colleague and graduate of MUW’s first cohort of DNP graduates, has had a manuscript from her DNP project work on osteoporosis management manuscript accepted for publication in August 2015 by American Nurse Today, Evidence-Based Guidelines for Management of Osteoarthritis: What Is a Nurse to Do? Dr. Pearson also received an Endo Osteoporosis Grant from the American Association of Nurse Practitioners in collaboration with Dr. Mary Smith in January 2014–December 2014. For this grant, she designed and published a pamphlet for the project titled “Managing Your Osteoarthritis.” Of the five graduates and three current full-time students, five have presented their projects on state and national levels via posters, podium presentations, and publications. We celebrate the contributions that our DNP graduates are already making to the body of knowledge in nursing!
Please feel free to tell your colleagues who are interested in becoming a family nurse practitioner and those who are interested in pursuing a DNP about The W! We are the only university in Mississippi to offer all levels of nursing education from associate degree through doctoral degree. Please call and come see us. The graduate nursing faculty and I are always willing to talk to nurses and nursing students who are interested in continuing their education with us. Let me know if you have any questions or suggestions. Thank you for supporting nursing at The W!

Johnnie Sue Wijewardane, Chair

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**News from Our Alumni**

Rochelle K. LaFoon, ASN class of 2014, is currently residing in Little Rock, AR with her husband Ben (also a W grad from culinary arts). She is employed as a nurse in the OR at St. Vincent Infirmary (Catholic health initiatives-CHI St. Vincent Infirmary) in outpatient surgery. It is a magnet hospital and ranked number one in central Arkansas. Their surgical services include ortho, spine/neuro, gyn, urology, cardiovascular, pediatrics, and geriatrics. The unit uses the Davinci Robot for gyn, prostate, and uro treatments and surgeries.

Rebecca Henry Butler, BSN class of 2001 and MSN class of 2004, currently resides in Pontotoc, MS and is an FNP and co-owner of Express Care Wes since 2011. She serves as a preceptor for MUW, University of Memphis, Union, UAB, Delta State University, and the University of Southern Mississippi. She has been married to Kris Butler since 2000, and they have three children ages 9, 5, and the youngest a year old in May.

Ashley Martin, RN-BSN class of 2013, of Byram, MS is currently employed as a post-op surgical nurse at Baptist Hospital in Jackson, MS. She will marry Chamberland P. Adams (MUW Alumni 2013) the summer of 2015. Their daughter Ariel Adams will turn four this June.

Bailey Knight McNeese, BSN class of 2011, and Mark McNeese, BSN class of 2012, are currently employed with Monroe Cavell Jr. Children’s Hospital in the pediatric cardiac ICU in Nashville, TN. The couple just recently moved to Nashville and are enjoying working together in the same unit.

LaShonda Kelly, ASN & BSN class of 2013 and 2014, of Jackson, MS is currently serving in adult ICU at Baptist Hospital Jackson, MS Campus. She will be attending UAB Graduate School of Nursing after having graduated cum laude from the MUW RN-BSN in 2014. She is currently a member of the Sigma Theta Tau-Zeta Rho Chapter, MNA/ANA, M-OADN, and is certified in TB Surveillance and Testing, ACLS, and PALS.
Greetings and salutations! Carey McCarter of the Graduate faculty, Nan Anderson of the BSN faculty, Pam Thomas of the ASN faculty, Marie Byrne of the SLP Faculty, Lola Wilson (our faithful executive assistant), and our student representatives would like to bid you a big welcome to this year’s publication of Nursing Notes! We hope you will consider coming to homecoming this year (March 26–29) and touring our nursing building and the simulation labs. It will make you very proud. We would also like to remind you that you are able to contact us through the department website www.muw.edu. Our committee continues to collect e-mail addresses and snail mail addresses for the alumni contact area of MUW Wired. Please respond when the foundation calls with your e-mail address so that the directory can be current. Our webmaster decided to make the directory for all alums! We find that it is really hard to make it to homecoming festivities with trying to juggle work schedules and think that it would be nice to seek out and find classmates, visit on the web, and then set a time to get together in person for homecoming here on campus. Please e-mail any comments that you might have concerning this to pdthomas@muw.edu at your earliest convenience.

Macy Woods Keith, ASN class of 2014, of Jackson, MS serves at St. Dominic Hospital in the cardiology step down ICU for post-op CABs, heart caths, ablations, ICD/PPM inserts, etc. The unit also treats CHF, and chest pain observations and is now known as the number one heart hospital in Mississippi.

Coretta Sanders, ASN class of 2012, of Columbus, MS is currently serving on 4 PT/Med Surg and Peds at Baptist Hospital and is also involved in endeavors to improve the health of the community. She finished her BSN in 2014 and plans to apply for the MSN program.

Heather Meggs, ASN class of 2012, of Columbus, MS is serving in the CCU at Baptist and plans on trying travel nursing part time sometimes this year.

Robyn Dalton, ASN class 2012, of Columbus, MS currently enjoys serving in the CCU at Baptist. She will begin her BSN in the fall of 2015. The Dalton family welcomes a new addition to the family; she is Magnolia Jane Dalton. and she was born November 4, 2014.

The Alumni Committee would like to thank each of you for contacting us and wish that we could hear more news from the rest of you. When you get your Nursing Notes Spring 2015 edition, please take a moment to think of a classmate who you haven’t heard from in ages or a memory that gets your mind spinning and hopefully ends with a smile. Jot it down on the form or a separate piece of paper and send it back to us for publication next spring. PLEASE WRITE AND RESPOND—we would love to hear from you!
ASN Winston County Tornado Relief

After the devastating Winston County tornado of April 2014, the entire ASN unit came together to collect both monetary and item donations for those suffering damages. The students utilized Winston County Nursing Home as a clinical facility. Blankets, toiletries, cleaning supplies, snacks, and money were carried to the facility for distribution. We are so very proud of the commitment of our students, faculty, and staff to their communities and patients.

ASN Faculty in the News

Brandy Larmon is working on her dissertation and is hoping to finish by the summer. She has been very busy working with her committee to obtain her EdD in higher education (nursing cognate) degree at Delta State University.

Mary Helen Ruffin has been accepted to the doctoral program at William Carey University in Hattiesburg, MS. She began her course work in fall of 2014.

Brandy Larmon and Maria Stephens attended the Concept Based Curriculum Conference in Dallas, TX in March 2014. The conference was designed as a “think tank” to assist schools of nursing to incorporate concept-based teaching methods into the school’s curriculum.

Tammy Bolton welcomed a new grandson this summer. Emmett Scott Johnson was born August 1, 2014. Mrs. Bolton enjoys babysitting duty on a regular basis!

Adrian Sligh was accepted to the doctoral program at Samford University and began his course work this spring. He also has attended workshops on advanced simulation and a cancer workshop relating to the future of genetic sequencing treatments.

Allison Caston, Tracy, and Ava welcomed a new addition to their family May 7, 2014. Adalyn Miller Caston weighed in at 7 lbs 14 oz.

Karen Nabors, Tammy Bolton, Allison Caston, Brandy Larmon, Mary Helen Ruffin, Adrian Sligh, and Pam Thomas attended the M-OADN Conference in Jackson, MS.

BSN Faculty in the News

Welcome new faculty members:
Dr. Joyce Pate
*Assistant Professor, Columbus faculty*

Mrs. Carol Vinzant
*Assistant Professor & RN to BSN APO Coordinator*

Mrs. Penny Finch
*APO Faculty*

Mrs. Leigh Anne Puckett (*transferred from adjunct to full time status*), APO Faculty

Ms. DJ Chumbley
*Administrative Assistant, APO*
Dr. Kristi Acker obtained certification as an Advanced Certified Hospice & Palliative Nurse in September 2014. In October 2014, she completed the Alabama State Nurses Association Leadership Academy. Her recent presentations include “Shared Decision-Making Concerning Chemotherapy Continuation at End of Life” podium presentation at the Sigma Theta Tau Region 8 Conference; “Assessment and Documentation of Advance Directives in Primary Care” poster presentation at the Alabama State Nurses Association Annual Conference; “Palliative Care Access: Developing a Culture for Change” podium presentation at the Alabama State Nurses Association Annual Convention; “Palliative Care for the Hospitalized Geriatric Patient” podium presentation at the DCH Regional Medical Center Geriatric Nursing Conference.

Dr. Sueanne Davidson has teamed up with the Mississippi Alzheimer’s Association and will be speaking throughout the state at various medical conferences as well as caregiver groups. She presented “I’m Still Here” Alzheimer’s presentation at Oktibbeha Regional Medical Center in Starkville in September. She also was elected as vice president for District 18 MNA chapter and presented a controlled substances update for nurse practitioners in the district-18 area at their first official meeting in November. Her lecture was approved for two contact hours for controlled substance by the Mississippi Nurses Association.

Dr. Lorraine Gaddis presented her research regarding the health care experiences of midlife lesbians at the Sigma Theta Tau Region 8 Convention on October 31, 2014, in Murphreesboro, TN. She also presented a poster at the Southern Association of Counselor Educators and Supervisors Fall Convention in Birmingham, AL in October. Related work conducted by Dr. Gaddis has been accepted for two national conferences in 2015.

Dr. Terri Hamill is currently on the Mississippi Nurses Association’s Advanced Practice Council.

New APO adjunct faculty members:
Mrs. Lisa Bailey    Mrs. Lisa Pearson
Mrs. Terri Green    Mrs. Melody Poole
Dr. Kristi Dempsey

Welcome back to The W as adjunct faculty:
Mrs. Gayle Elliott and Ms. Janice Giallourakis

Mrs. Cathy Smith and Mr. Terry Todd are enrolled at Samford University in the DNP programs. Both are at the project stage and are set to graduate this spring.

Mrs. Melesia Henry is working on the final touches of her dissertation and should complete her PhD this year.

Mrs. Carol Vinzant and Mrs. Dana Walker began the DNP program at Samford this spring. They enjoy being “challenged” as any nursing program challenges.

Graduate Faculty in the News
Open Invitation

The Sigma Theta Tau Zeta Rho Chapter has compiled a cookbook which includes several hundred recipes from the nursing faculty and staff. The cost is $16.00 per book, plus $4.00 for shipping. They can be purchased from Zeta Rho members as well as the ASN Program Office. The proceeds will be used for scholarships. Come by and get your copy today, or email or call for a copy to be sent to your home address!

Dr. Hamill served as a delegate at the MNA Annual Conference in Biloxi in October. Terri was elected to president of MNA’s District 18. She is also a provider at the MUW’s Student Health Center and at Friendship Clinic. Dr. Hamill has been accepted for a poster presentation at AANP Convention in June 2015 and has had a poster and podium presentation accepted at the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties annual conference in Baltimore, MD in April 2015.

Dr. Carey McCarter currently serves as a board member for District 18 of the Mississippi Nurses’ Association (MNA) representing Clay County. Dr. McCarter also serves on the provider unit and on the Advanced Practice Council for MNA. She was a delegate for District 18 at the 2014 MNA Annual Convention. Dr. McCarter presented “Assessment and Documentation of Advanced Directives in Primary Care” at the 2014 MNA Annual Convention and has had a poster and podium presentation accepted at the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties Annual Conference in Baltimore, MD in April 2015.

Dr. Shonda Phelon is the current president of MNA District 32. She also serves on the advanced practice council for the American Psychiatric Nurses Association. Her Doctor of Nursing Practice Project, Suicide Assessment and Prevention: A Clinical Practice Guideline, was accepted for presentation at three national conventions. Dr. Phelon presented a poster at the National Nurse Practitioner Symposium in July in Keystone, CO and a podium presentation at the American Psychiatric Nurses Association Annual Convention in Indianapolis in October. She has also been accepted for a podium presentation at the American Association of Nurse Practitioner’s Annual Meeting in June in New Orleans. In addition to being part-time faculty at The W, Dr. Phelon practices full time as a family nurse practitioner and an adult psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner at Region VI Mental Health.

Dr. Patsy Smyth continues to teach and provides medical care to the residents of two nursing homes. She is considering retirement this year, or at least going down to part time as a transition. She went to the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners in Nashville in July and recruited for MUW’s DNP program. She is active in District 18 of MNA.

Dr. Johnnie Sue Wijewardane currently serves on Mississippi Nurses Association Advanced Practice Council and is president of Zeta Rho Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society. She has been invited to attend the American Association of Nurse Practitioners Region 11 Leadership Meeting in Atlanta, GA in late January 2015. Dr. Wijewardane has been accepted for a poster presentation at National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties Annual Conference in Baltimore, MD in April 2015.
LET US HEAR FROM YOU! WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?

Catch us up on some things. Share with us your accomplishments and upcoming ventures. Tell us about your awards, family additions, current employment positions, titles of publications, etc. If your address has changed, take a minute to let us know. We would like to tell other MUW alumni of your accomplishments. Attach a separate sheet if necessary or send via email to the appropriate department chair (email address given with program report).

Send your news to: Mississippi University for Women, 1100 College Street MUW-910
Department of Nursing, Alumni Committee
Columbus, MS 39701-5800

Name (include maiden) ____________________________ Class _________ Program __________
Address ____________________________ City ____________ State _____ Zip Code ________
Telephone (Home) ________________ (Work) _______________ E-mail address ____________
Place of Employment ____________________________ Position ______________________
News (i.e. marriages, births, family, news, professional, civil activities, awards, etc.) ____________________________

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